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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8744
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0012
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 000277

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CCA, DRL/MLGA, EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2018

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY NICOSIA THOUGHTS ON "DAY OF SOLIDARITY
WITH CUBAN PEOPLE"

REF: A. SECSTATE 46997

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 45792

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald L. Schlicher, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) In promoting the May 21 "Day of Solidarity with the Cuban People," the Embassy intends to place an Ambassador-drafted op-ed in prominent Greek Cypriot daily newspapers. The article will attempt to draw attention to the plight of Cuba's prisoners of conscience, call for a legitimate political transition on the island, and promote support here for Cuba's embattled opposition and pro-democracy civil society. Once published, the Embassy will upload the text onto its public website for broader viewing. Post also plans to raise Cuba and its deplorable human rights record with Foreign Ministry and other government interlocutors, academics, and civil society representatives in the run-up to May 21. The Embassy is unaware of any activities planned by the Cypriot government or Cyprus-based private organizations to commemorate "Solidarity Day," however.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Convincing Cypriots, both official and rank-and-file, on the need to adopt a harder line against the Cuban government appears from our vantage point a tough sell. Relations between Nicosia and Havana long have been cozy. Despite their dissimilar backgrounds, for example, Cyprus's first president, Archbishop Makarios, established friendly ties with Fidel Castro in the 1960s. Mainstream leaders from numerous political parties since have visited the Caribbean isle and not shied from photo opportunities with Fidel. Even under right-wing President Glafkos Clerides (1993-2003), Cyprus supported Cuba in the UN and other international bodies. Now, of course, Cyprus is governed by AKEL (Communist) party Secretary General Demetris Christofias, whose office walls (at least at party HQ) feature prominent photos of Che Guevara and other Cuban Revolution heroes. As such, the Embassy believes a discreet, focused, and limited-objective campaign on Cuba holds greater promise than a frontal assault. End Comment.
SCHLICHER